

# Alianza para el Turismo Comunitario



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## **I. Executive Summary**

### **Support to government transition process**

During the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2012 (January 1, 2012 to March 31, 2012), Counterpart continued implementing activities according to the annual work plan in key regions of the country and covering key topics related to economic development through tourism and handicrafts, biodiversity conservation and enhanced food security for families in the Western Highlands.

Counterpart has been supporting the government transition process as newly appointed government officials begin researching information on priorities and past actions and current officials try to ensure continuity of efforts.

Counterpart continues to work with INGUAT on the implementation of actions to strengthen community and nature based tourism. At the same time, Counterpart has been supporting the new INGUAT appointed director, Pedro Duchez, and his team in understanding the context of the institution and the past history of actions as well as priorities for 2012. Most of the efforts with INGUAT are being coordinated under the umbrella of the Maya 2012 actions which seek to position Guatemala as a top tourist destination related to Maya culture.

Additionally, Counterpart is continuing to work with CONAP in order to systematize a portfolio of actions that need continuity during 2012 and that are vital for appropriate public use management in protected areas. Once the new CONAP authorities are appointed, Counterpart will continue to support stakeholders in lobbying for the implementation of the agreed upon actions. At the municipal level, Counterpart is also coordinating efforts with current and new officials in order to facilitate the transition process and maintain support for communities and tourism destinations. With support from USAID, Counterpart has also reached out to Ministry of Culture in order to establish new grounds for collaboration based on the priorities of the program and the new administration in office.

### **Tourism and Handicrafts Value Chain Strengthening**

Counterpart continued to provide training and technical support to enterprises and associations in the tourism and handicrafts value chains. Through the "Let's Boost Your Business (Logremos que su empresa o destino venda más)," 15 beneficiaries in Sololá and five new beneficiaries in Petén received technical assistance through the production or improvement of logos and promotional material design.

#### *Supporting Women's Producer Groups*

A number of women's handcraft producer associations were formalized and strengthened this quarter. Counterpart continued to collaborate with Fundación Tradiciones Mayas to formalize and strengthen six producer groups representing 64 women. Evaluation results show that 60% of these women are now able to generate receipts and calculate and pay taxes— a notable achievement given the high rates of illiteracy among rural women. In partnership with Comunidades de la Tierra, two new producer groups in the Western Highlands region were selected for incubation activities, including a group envisioning and strategic planning session. Working with AGEXPORT, an additional five new artisan groups were selected to receive technical assistance aimed at improving entrepreneurial capacities and linking to relevant value chains. In Quetzaltenango, leaders from 23 producer groups received training and technical assistance focusing on leadership, quality control and promotional strategies.

#### *Handicrafts Promotion*

A number of producer groups' work was promoted through various events. In January, Guatemalan representatives at the New York International Gift Fair showcased products from several beneficiary organizations. Orders received during the show amounted to \$5,500 and 16 potential clients were identified for follow up. On March 14 and 15,

AGEXPORT hosted a handicrafts showroom featuring artisans from the Western Highlands in which representatives from Wal-Mart reviewed offerings to be featured during their "From Our Hands to Your Home" festival. Orders are expected for the beginning of the next quarter. With the annual New World Crafts Central American Handicrafts Trade Show scheduled for September, 83% of the exhibit space has so far been reserved.

#### *Access to Credit*

Counterpart continued to facilitate the access of credit and financial services to tourism and handcraft SMEs. Working with the Association for the Integral Development of Guatemala (ADIGUA), 243 women participated in nine trainings that ultimately led to the issuance of 147 microenterprise loans, totaling \$349,800. In Chisec and Raxruha, Alta Verapaz, Counterpart and local partner AGRETUCHI (Community Tourism Association of Chisec and Raxruha) implemented a rural credit program, allowing families to participate in the tourism value chain by sourcing poultry and eggs to local restaurants. In all, 13 loans were issued for a total of \$20,124. Through a collective effort with Guatemala's Network of Microfinance Institutions (REDIMIF) 3 new loans totaling \$18,065 were issued to micro-entrepreneurs in Sololá, Totonicapán and Chimaltenango.

#### *Maya 2012 Commemoration*

18 community and tour operator representatives participated in a workshop designed to prepare participants to field questions from visitors about the Maya 2012 phenomenon. Additionally, 35 representatives from the USAID Guatemala mission and the US embassy attended a Counterpart-facilitated workshop focused on capitalizing on global interest of Maya 2012. Counterpart has been active in supporting Guatemala's ability to respond, conducting an assessment of sites and parks related to the 2012 commemoration and providing technical support in evaluating and redeveloping the official Guatemala 2012 website.

#### **Market-Based Conservation Strategies through Tourism and Handcrafts Sectors**

Throughout the second quarter of 2012, Counterpart supported the development and promotion of a number of tools and systems for improving natural resource management. Visitors to program tourism-related sites amounted to 62,820 in the second quarter, a 16% increase from FY2012 quarter one.

#### *Plans and Workshops*

Counterpart continued to support the implementation of the public use plan for Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park by forming a planning group comprised of several stakeholders with initial planning workshops scheduled for the beginning of Quarter 3. Additionally, in K'ojlab' tze'te tnom Regional Municipal Park, Counterpart is supporting awareness and coordination workshops with municipal authorities and technical staff from the Todos Santos municipalities to assist in the development of a master plan for the protected area surrounding the park. In Quetzaltenango, the first workshop on protected areas co-management was held on March 7. Counterpart is also supporting its partners in the development and implementation of the Mega diverse Guatemala Expo, which will communicate Guatemala's biodiversity assets and their importance and potential for future development.

#### *Tools*

Through a series of pilot interventions, Counterpart is developing a tool for the detection, prevention, monitoring and management of tourism impacts in protected areas. Upon completion, the interventions, the first of which were carried out in late February 2012, will be synthesized into a generic tool. Additionally, new guidance tools and policy for the co-management of protected areas is being validated by Counterpart. Counterpart supported the use of the

Unified Registry of Visitors (RUV) system, which generates information for planning and managing the protected areas and developing market-based tourism and service activities.

#### *Guide Training*

Counterpart facilitated a course on 2012: Archaeology, Astronomy, Epigraphy and Prophecies of the Ancient Maya for tourism guides and members of the Yaxha- Nakum – Naranjo National Park staff. The course trained 30 tourism guides and the park's interpretive staff on the interest surrounding the December 21, 2012 Maya change of era date. Additionally, Counterpart is collaborating on the organization of the National Tourism Guides Congress, which will provide 50 hours of certified training for tourism guides and an opportunity to share best practices and experiences.

#### *Relationship Building*

Counterpart continued to collaborate with Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park administration to strengthen and develop capabilities for community associations that will provide tourism services in the park. These associations will generate job and income opportunities for surrounding communities. Additionally, Counterpart has assisted in Semana Santa preparations in the area, taking advantage of the high tourist numbers during the week.

Throughout the implementation of all activities during the second quarter of FY2012, Counterpart continued its commitment to environmental compliance, ensuring that all activities do not have an impact on the environment. As well, Counterpart continues its dedication to gender mainstreaming, implementing activities that empower women to pursue and manage their own enterprises. This effort focuses on reducing gender-related inequities in access to credit, productive means and entrepreneurial activities. As well, initial interventions in Chajil Siguan have indicated that gender mainstreaming activities may be required and Counterpart is working to identify potential interventions with relevant stakeholders.

# I. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter FY2012 Results Summary Tables

PMP Indicators						
Indicator	Project Global Target	FY 2011 accumulated total	Fiscal Year 2012 Target	1st Qtr. 2012	2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. 2012	Cumulative Total
Income generated (US\$)	\$20,000,000.00	18,108,195	3,000,000	1,481,639	1,019,168.05	20,609,001.95
From tourism		13,013,786	2,000,000	803,863	829,833.67	
From handicrafts		5,094,408	1,000,000	677,776	189,334.38	
New Jobs created (Full time job equivalents)	8,700	5,261	2,580	92	398	5,751
Visitors	675,430	720,053	130,000	52,882	62,820	835,755
New SMEs created	220	132	88	6	2	140
Strengthened organizations	1124 (cumulative LOP)	1145 (cumulative LOP)	220 (currently)	205 (currently)	170 (currently)	1196 (cumulative LOP)
Credit allocated for tourism and handicrafts initiatives (US\$)	1,005,581	925,566	82,000	27,226	387,993.55	1,340,785.10
Leverage (US\$)	8,572,000	7,857,655	1,002,000	161,295	1,588,240.40	9,473,552.04
Cost share (US\$)	2,600,000	2,215,886	515,000	99,948	212,745	2,398,655.02

<b>ETEO - SO2 / ECON GROWTH INDICATORS</b> <b>OP Indicators <i>Program Element 6.2 Private Sector Productivity</i></b>						
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Project Global Target</b>	<b>FY 2011 accumulated total</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2012 Target</b>	<b>1st Qtr. 2012</b>	<b>2nd Qtr. 2012</b>	<b>Cumulative Total</b>
<b><i>Program Element 6.2 Private Sector Productivity</i></b>						
<b>Number of firms currently receiving USG assistance to improve mgmt. practices</b>	<b>1,124</b> <i>(cumulative LOP)</i>	<b>1145</b> <i>(cumulative)</i>	<b>220</b> <i>(Current)</i>	<b>205</b> <i>(Current)</i>	<b>170</b> <i>(Current)</i>	<b>1196</b> <i>(cumulative LOP)</i>
<b>Number of SMEs currently receiving USG assistance to access bank loans or private equity</b>	<b>196</b> <i>(cumulative LOP)</i>	<b>179</b> <i>(cumulative)</i>	<b>17</b> <i>(current)</i>	<b>5</b> <i>(current)</i>	<b>175</b> <i>(current)</i>	<b>359</b> <i>(cumulative LOP)</i>
<b>Number of public-private dialogue mechanisms utilized as a result of USG assistance.</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b> <b>maintained</b>	<b>4</b> <b>maintained</b>	<b>4</b> <b>maintained</b>	<b>4</b> <b>maintained</b>	<b>4</b> <b>maintained</b>
<b><i>Program Element 8.1 Natural Resources and Biodiversity</i></b>						
<b>Number of people with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable natural resource management and conservation as a result of USG assistance</b>	<b>10,869</b>	<b>10,108</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>11,116</b>

Number of women	5,142	4,811	450	108	431	5,350
Number of men	5,727	5,297	550	150	319	5,766
<b>Number of people receiving USG supported training in natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation</b>	<b>7,210</b>	<b>6,591</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>7,076</b>
<b>Sales of goods and services as a result of USAID programs, in thousand \$</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>18,108</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>1,482</b>	<b>1,019</b>	<b>20,609</b>
<b>Number of jobs created as a result of USAID programs (Full time job equivalents)</b>	<b>8,700</b>	<b>5,261</b>	<b>2,580</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>5,751</b>
<b>Number of households benefiting directly from USG interventions.</b>	<b>13,372</b>	<b>13,744</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>1,249</b>	<b>15,394</b>

## II. Introduction

Guatemala's natural and cultural heritage and its human resources are all valuable assets to generate sustainable economic development in specific regions of the country through competitive tourism and handicrafts enterprises. Tourism and handicrafts initiatives help to generate and strengthen enterprises and activities in rural areas (including community organizations and micro, small and medium enterprises). Tourism has become a leading economic activity in Guatemala, especially in light of the international financial crisis and a significance reduction in remittances; however, Guatemalan tourism still faces huge challenges related to consolidating traditional and non-traditional tourism products and services and to generating new options for special interest markets that may be driven based on Guatemala's unique cultural, archaeological and biodiversity assets. Despite many initiatives, in several isolated cases, for the development and marketing of tourism products by communities and small and medium scale businesses, Guatemalan tourism products and services have not been able to penetrate all key markets and, in many cases, lack integration into relevant value chains.

The Alianza para el Turismo Comunitario (the Alliance), implemented by Counterpart International and its partners, through a cooperative agreement with USAID, has provided an excellent opportunity to work at the local level, promoting a greater number of micro, small and medium enterprises and enabling them to compete in international markets. The Alliance has and continues to generate, a wide array of possibilities for poverty reduction and local development and food security through income and job generation in rural areas, while helping to preserve the natural and cultural heritage.

By linking sustainable natural and cultural resource management with market opportunities, the necessary economic incentives are generated so that community members become interested in managing their heritage in a sustainable manner and, at the same time, are better able adapt to the challenges posed by climate change. In order to support community organizations, SMEs and other tourism organizations, Counterpart will continue to implement its activities through the following strategies: 1) building the organizational capacity of rural communities and SME tourism operations; 2) creating and marketing Guatemala's distinct brand of natural and cultural community destinations; 3) improving access to marketing, product design and financial services for the SMEs in tourism destinations and handicraft development; 4) using strategic public-private alliances; and 5) improving local support for and participation in the conservation of biological diversity.

This report describes the main activities and results developed during the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2012 in the regions and thematic areas where the project has planned interventions. Counterpart developed the activities in close coordination with institutional partners from the Guatemalan government, private sector and other NGOs including: INGUAT, CONAP, Ministry of Culture and Sports, INTECAP, Ministry of Economy, National Geographic, ANACAFE, COOPSAMA, BAMRURAL, Asociación Balam, AGEXPORT's Arts and Crafts and Sustainable Tourism Commissions, Guatemala's Microfinance Network (REDIMIF), Grupos Gestores, Guatemala's Chamber of Tourism (CAMTUR), Association for the Integral Development of Guatemala (ADIGUA), Association for Integral Development of the Lake Atitlán Basin (ADICLA), Red FASCO, and Maya 2012 Committee. Additionally, Counterpart continues to generate and strengthen relationships and joint work initiatives with local and regional partners such as tourism committees and commissions, local NGOs, cooperatives and producer groups.

### **III. General description of activities and results**

#### ***Component A: Tourism and Handicrafts Value Chain Strengthening***

**Objective 1:** Support and create a greater number of sustainable tourism and handicrafts SMEs and community based organizations in rural destinations through the value chain approach.

**Objective 2:** Improve access to marketing, product design, and financial and credit services for SMEs and community organizations involved in sustainable tourism and/or handicrafts development.

#### **Activities:**

##### **1.1 Improve marketing and business practices for tourism SMEs and CBOs through the value chain approach: "Logremos que su empresa ó destino venda más" (Let's boost your business) program**

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of Fiscal Year 2012, Counterpart continued to implement customized technical assistance and training activities for SMEs and Community Tourism Organizations in key regions of the country through the "Let's boost your business" (*Logremos que su empresa o destino venda más*) program. Marketing and promotional strategies and activities were designed and implemented both with existing and new beneficiaries.

## Petén

In Petén, Counterpart continues to provide technical assistance to a number of tourism and handicrafts SMEs in Central Petén, Southern Petén (San Luis, Dolores and Poptún) and El Remate. Five new beneficiaries were incorporated into the program during this quarter, and the technical assistance process was initiated with them. For the SMEs recently incorporated into the technical assistance program, the main need identified during the assessment process was to generate and/or consolidate a unified professional corporate image. Work has begun for all five new beneficiaries and the production or improvement of logos and branding elements is underway

Relevant products completed with previous beneficiaries of the technical assistance program include:

- i Sales catalog for Viajes Kan Ek's Trails Travel Agency
- i Business cards for La Casa de Doña Tonita Hotel and Restaurant, Nakuns Pizza y and Villa Los Arcos Hotel
- i Promotional fact sheets for El Muelle Hotel and Restaurant, Cahuí Restaurant and Villa Jazmines Hotel
- i Business cards and restaurant menú for Las Gardenias Hotel and Restaurant
- i Promotional banners for Bruno's Place Hotel and Finca El Profe Agritourism destination
- i Product labels for Artesanías en Madera La Casa del Arte Wood handicrafts business.



Figure 1: Sales catalog for Kan Ek's Trails Tour Operator, Buisness card for Las Gardenias Hotel and Restaurant, Promotional Factsheet for Cahuí Restaurant, Petén beneficiaries

## Sololá

During this quarter, Counterpart provided technical assistance through this program to a total of 15 beneficiaries, including 13 SMEs, one association and one federation in the municipalities of Sololá, Panajachel, San Pedro La Laguna, San Juan La Laguna, San Marcos La Laguna, San Andrés Semetabaj, Santa Lucía Utatlán, and Santiago Atitlán.

Specific actions were developed during this quarter following the learning by- doing process and the following results and products were completed in collaboration with the beneficiaries:

- i A promotional plan was developed and executed with Hotel Posada Chinimayá in preparation for the Semana Santa high season and commercial fairs targeted as promotional opportunities.
- i Stationery and two sets of promotional flyers were developed with Hotel Cacique Ralón. Stationery was identified as necessary in presenting a professional image,



Figure 2: Promotional posters and banners for MTB Atitlán

while the flyers were targeted at both events and celebrations and the Semana Santa visitors, featuring special promotions.

Counterpart worked with Casa Alegre and Roger's Tours, tour operators specialized in sports and adventure tourism, to develop promotional materials to promote the Mountain Bike "MTB Atitlán" event that will be held around Lake Atitlán in May.

- i Avenutra Park is one of the region's new beneficiaries. After completing the initial assessment, branding elements and the first promotional materials were produced, including a logo, promotional factsheet, and flyer.



Figure 5: Promotional flyer for the agave products by Xuaan Chiya' from San Juan la Laguna



Figure 3: Logo and promotional flyer for Aventura Park

- i A promotional poster was developed in order to promote all the activities, products and services offered by the Federation of Maya Peoples (FEDEPMA). FEDEPMA tourism activities offer a traditional mixture of community tourism, agro-tourism and community immersion.
- i In collaboration with Oxlajuj B'atz', an association of women's artisans organizations, Counterpart is supporting training and technical assistance for eleven (11) women's producer groups. The trainings have been focused on standardizing production processes for improved quality and developing products based on adequate research of market trends. Through the initial training, women from the producer groups reviewed the process for calculating costs of their products, quality control according to international standards and proper product coding for effective delivery and payment.



Figure 4: Participants in the workshop with Oxlajuj B'atz'

- i Counterpart worked with Servicios Turísticos Atitlán (STA) Tour Operator to produce a sales catalog that will allow them to expand their market by participating in different promotional and commercial events and venues. The catalog is also key in standardizing the products and services offered in order to raise profits and increase customer satisfaction levels.
- i A promotional poster was produced with Hotel Victoria from Panajachel.
- i Promotional flyers were produced with community enterprise Xuaan Chiyaal from San Juan la Laguna. The flyers feature a new line of handicraft products made with natural agave fibers.
- i As part of the implementation of sustainable tourism good practices, Counterpart worked with San Pedro and San Marcos Spanish Schools on developing and implementing a code of conduct for students hosted by local families.
- i Counterpart worked with Fundación Tradiciones Mayas on producing marketing and educational materials for their demonstrative medicinal plants garden and project.
- i Counterpart is supporting the Atitlán Basin Association for Integral Development (ADICLA) in the establishment of a new tourism and events venue in its farm El Encanto de Atitlán, located in San Andrés Semetabaj. During the previous quarter, Counterpart worked with ADICLA in planning the process for the legal registration of the venue with the Guatemalan tax administration system and with Guatemala's Tourism Institute (INGUAT). During this quarter, work focused on developing the logo and branding elements for Encanto de Atitlán and planning the necessary steps for startup and complete registration of the business.

#### Formalization and strengthening of six women's handicrafts groups from Lake Atitlán

Counterpart continued to collaborate with Fundación Tradiciones Mayas to formalize and strengthen six women's handicrafts producer groups as independent enterprises. During the previous quarter, two training-of-trainers workshops were implemented with two representatives from each of the six groups. During this quarter, the workshops were replicated in each of the groups by the leaders who had participated in the first training. Through this replication, each group is now fully informed about responsibilities and opportunities of their operations' legal and financial framework. Evaluation results show that over 60% of the women in the groups became totally enabled to generate receipts and calculate and pay taxes (this result is very remarkable, considering the high rates of illiteracy in the communities in this region, especially among women).

Three additional follow-up visits to each group were developed during this quarter. Each group acquired full accounting and taxes books and documentation and produced the necessary organizational backup documentation. Additionally, the groups received additional assistance on the process for interviewing and hiring their own accountants. During the third visit to each group, a work plan and detailed terms of reference for the newly hired accountant were completed.

The new businesses formed through this process include 64 women and their formal names and locations are:

1. Ixoqib kukan kib, Patanatic, Panajachel
2. Flor Clarence, Santa Clara la Laguna
3. Qatoqib de Chirijox, Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán
4. Flor Juanera, San Juan la Laguna
5. Chuwila, Quiejel, Chichicastenango
6. Voz de los Tzutujiles, San Juan la Laguna



Figure 6: Participants in the workshops for formalization of women's businesses in Lake Atitlán

### Sololá's Tourism Commission

Counterpart continued to participate as a member of Sololá's Tourism Commission, providing leadership and technical support in the implementation of marketing and other program development activities. During this quarter, Counterpart led the process for data collection and editing for the official Lake Atitlán destination web portal ([www.visitatitlan.com.gt](http://www.visitatitlan.com.gt)). This endeavor includes field data collection and editing of information about tourism attractions, activities, events and services in the 19 municipalities of Sololá and final posting of the information in the portal. The Tourism commission validated the first report, including 80% of the information of the 19 municipalities. During the next quarter, the process will include final edition, translation and uploading into the portal. This activity is a follow up action, implementing some of the recommendations developed during a consulting practicum facilitated by Counterpart for the Tourism Commission, in collaboration with Del Valle and George Washington Universities.

### **Verapaces**

#### Semana Santa preparations for Puerta al Mundo Maya

Counterpart supported the communities of Puerta al Mundo Maya destinations in Chisec and Raxruha, Alta Verapaz in organizing the necessary preparations for the Semana Santa high season. Semana Santa is a key season for these destinations, as they receive nearly 80% of their annual visitors around these dates. Since the Puerta al Mundo Maya destinations opened in 2004, Counterpart motivated them to seek support in order to generate visitor attention-grabbing posts that could provide assistance and services that would be impossible to provide solely by the community destinations. The initiative grew to the point where the local mayors supported the process by providing equipment and coordinating efforts with fire departments and red cross for emergency attention, with community destinations and local transit police for adequate information and orientation of tourists, and with local association AGRETUCHI for the installation of fully operational tourism attention and support posts. This year posed a special challenge because both the towns Chisec and Raxruha had new municipal administrations. Thus, Counterpart supported the communities and AGRETUCHI in pursuing initial contacts with the mayors' offices and presenting a recollection of previous Semana Santa preparations. Mayors from both towns became engaged in the process and the communities and AGRETUCHI was able to carry out the negotiation and preparation processes on their own with some technical assistance from Counterpart and support from the mayors. At the time of writing, most preparations had been arranged and the destinations and towns were ready for the Semana Santa high season.

#### Viviente Verapaz

In the Verapaces region, Counterpart is coordinating efforts with Viviente Verapaz, an alliance of community and private tourism destinations and a tour operator in order to assess products and generate a promotional package. The assessment process started during this quarter and the production of the promotional package will continue during the next.

## **Western Highlands**

### Na'be Xe'lajuj Noj 2012 Festival

Counterpart supported the Quetzaltenango branch of the National Tourism Chamber (CAMTUR) in the implementation of the Na'be Xe'lajuj Noj 2012 Festival. The festival was aimed at improving the unity and coordination amongst tourism sector stakeholders in the region and promoting Quetzaltenango and its surrounding municipalities as an integral tourist destination. The event included Maya ceremonies, conferences touching on local attractions and the importance of the 13<sup>th</sup> B'aktun, a festival of flavors, and a series of dance and cultural events.

### **Maya 2012 activities**

#### 2012: Archaeology, Astronomy, Epigraphy and Prophecies of the Ancient Maya Workshops

Counterpart continued to support the 2012 Committee, a voluntary grouping of private, public and academic sector organizations aimed at promoting and maximizing the potential of Guatemala as the epicenter of the 2012 Maya commemoration date. During this quarter, Counterpart continued to lead the implementation of training workshops about the Maya 2012 commemoration. In the Verapaces region, a workshop on Maya Culture and 2012 was facilitated in collaboration with Maya Organization Asind Rex We for members of the Viviente Verapaz community tourism destinations. In total, 18 community and tour operator representatives (7 women and 11 men) participated in the workshop. The workshop provided participants with the necessary information to field questions from visitors about the Maya 2012 phenomenon and to relate their products to relevant elements of the Maya 2012 cycle celebration, generating value-added and a real approach for their products and services.

#### Maya 2012 Workshop for USAID Guatemala Mission

On Friday February 10, Counterpart facilitated a workshop on "Guatemala in the epicenter of the 2012 Maya calendar phenomenon: A practical focus on a controversial topic" for the USAID Guatemala Mission and some representatives of the United States of America Embassy in Guatemala. The four hour long workshop provided an introductory approach in order to understand the scientific basis behind the mythical date of 12/21/2012 for the Maya and how it relates to tourism sites in Guatemala. Approximately 35 representatives from different USAID Guatemala offices participated during the workshop, facilitated by Guatemalan archaeologists Tomás Barrientos and Ernesto Arredondo. The workshop was supported by a notebook/manual, developed for these workshops, which have been implemented in four-hour versions for the tourism sector and opinion leaders and in sixteen-hour-long versions for tourism guides. Previous workshops have been developed in Guatemala City, Tecpan,



Figure 7: Inaugural Maya ceremony for the Na'be Xe'lajuj Noj 2012 Festival



Figure 8: Front and back cover of the manual shared with participants during the Maya 2012 trainings

Tomás Barrientos and Ernesto Arredondo. The workshop was supported by a notebook/manual, developed for these workshops, which have been implemented in four-hour versions for the tourism sector and opinion leaders and in sixteen-hour-long versions for tourism guides. Previous workshops have been developed in Guatemala City, Tecpan,

Quetzaltenango, Solola, Peten, Tikal National Park, and Antigua Guatemala. Counterpart will continue to support different efforts related to maximizing the exposure opportunities generated by the 2012 phenomenon in the Maya area. Ongoing efforts include orienting investments for public use and visitor management improvement in protected areas, developing contingency plans for select 2012 related sites and developing methodologies for tourism impact prevention, detection and management, in collaboration with Guatemala's Protected Areas Council (CONAP) and Ministry of Culture and Sports.

#### Maya 2012 Wayeb Celebrations at Tikal and Iximche

Counterpart participated in the event held by the Presidency, the Ministry of Culture and INGUAT on Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup> in Tikal in order to celebrate the first day of the Wayeb, according to the Maya Calendar. Counterpart also participated in the event held at Iximche on Wednesday February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the last day of the Wayeb. More importantly, Counterpart supported the participation of community tourism representatives in the Iximche event. Representatives from the "Quiché Inexplorado" destinations and from the "Viviente Verapaz Alliance" featured their tourism and handicrafts products in the exhibit stands. Counterpart also supported the participation of the 2012 Committee with a promotional booth. During the events, Guatemala's President and Vice President (See Figure 9) delivered messages, reinforcing the importance of contributing to tourism development and the preservation of natural and cultural heritage in sites and communities associated to the 2012 events.

#### Assessment of sites and parks related to the 2012 commemoration

As part of the collaborative efforts with the 2012 Committee, Counterpart performed an in-depth analysis of 17 proposed sites and parks related to the 2012 commemoration. Based on a set of criteria, ten priority sites and parks were then selected to perform field evaluations. Field evaluations included both an assessment of the conditions of the sites or parks and their environs as well as a complete inventory of complementary services in the surrounding region. The study continues to be shared and used as a planning and prioritizing tool by government offices and the private sector. Counterpart is working on editing a final version of the document, which is also being used as a basis to produce different sets of communications pieces for the 2012 Committee web platform, Geotourism web platform, and for press and tour operator workshops designed in collaboration with INGUAT.

#### Official Guatemala 2012 website

Government and private organizations involved in the development of the agendas around the Maya 2012 celebrations have requested Counterpart's technical guidance and support in evaluating and redeveloping the official Guatemala 2012 website. The work plan for the assessment, structure and content development of the site was developed and discussed during this quarter and implementation is underway. The website is definitely a valuable tool for informing Guatemalans and visitors based on scientific facts and promoting the sites related to the 2012 phenomenon. According to archaeological research, most of these sites are protected areas with significant biodiversity value and high tourism potential.



Figure 9: Members of the Viviente Verapaz community tourism alliance showcase their tourism and handicrafts products while the President, Vice President and INGUAT Director visit their stand at the Iximche event

## 1.2 Increase access to credit and financial services for tourism and handicraft SMEs

### Collaboration with Guatemala's Network of Microfinance Institutions (REDIMIF)

During this quarter, a total of 3 loans were issued through the collaborative effort with REDIMIF. Credit beneficiaries are micro entrepreneurs from Solola, Totonicapán and Chimaltenango. The businesses from Solola and Totonicapán are dedicated to providing transportation services, and the credit will be used to expand business activities by purchasing new vehicles. In Chimaltenango, the credit was used to expand the working capital of an artisanal jewelry workshop. The total amount of the credits is US\$18,065.52 (Q. 140,000.00), with individual loans ranging from US\$1,290.32 to US\$12,903.23. A total of 14 jobs are generated by these 3 micro enterprises (50% are indigenous women (7), 29% indigenous men (4) and 21% non-indigenous men (3)).

### Collaboration with the Association for the Integral Development of Guatemala (ADIGUA)

Counterpart is implementing joint activities with ADIGUA through the "Economic Reactivation of the Tourism Sector in Western Guatemala" program. The program was designed in order to strengthen the technical, administrative, and gender equity abilities of micro and small tourism entrepreneurs and handicrafts producers from Sololá, Quiché, and Totonicapán. It is expected that, through these actions, a greater number of micro and small entrepreneurs will be able to obtain access to credit for productive activities and manage their loans appropriately and in a profitable manner. Additionally, the program includes a series of training and marketing actions. As part of the commercial activities, marketing tools will be developed with each beneficiary who completes the program and commercial fairs will be held in key regions during special dates. Preparations for the first commercial fair, to be held in Panajachel during the Semana Santa high season, are underway.

During this quarter, 243 women participated in 9 trainings covering topics such as: business management, women's rights, sex and gender, baking, and handicrafts. Counterpart supported increased access to credit activities implemented through ADIGUA by providing expanded customer services and dedicated personnel and strategies for the tourism and handicrafts sectors. Interventions aimed at increased access to credit resulted in 147 loans issued to 146 indigenous and one non-indigenous micro entrepreneur, for a total amount of Q.2,710,950 (US\$349,800.00).

### Credits for productive projects with families from communities in Chisec and Raxruhá, Alta Verapaz

During fiscal year 2011, Counterpart and local partner AGRETUCHI (Community Tourism Association of Chisec and Raxruhá) implemented a rural credits program in order to incorporate families from local communities into the tourism value chain through sourcing poultry and eggs for local restaurants. In response to additional demands for the establishment of poultry family farms in communities surrounding Candelaria Caves National Park, Counterpart and AGRETUCHI continued to explore credit options. After negotiations with several potential financing institutions, the project became consolidated and Banrural provided the capital for 13 loans of Q12,000.00 each (\$ 1,548.00). The program has the particularity that each loan is managed in a joint fashion by two families so individual family loans are worth Q 6,000.00 based on the exact estimation of capital needed to begin the poultry farm. Thus, 26 families from 13 communities are benefiting from this initiative and have already started their production process receiving technical assistance from INTECAP and from Counterpart through some of the initial beneficiaries of the program who have become field extension agents.

### Collaboration with the Financial Network of Community Associations (Red FASCO)

Through a joint effort with Red FASCO, Counterpart has expanded its share of technical assistance and potential credit beneficiaries in the Western Highlands. This joint initiative will allow for improved training and technical assistance services for micro and small entrepreneurs in the region. The program will also generate a certified formal training program for rural finance workers in the Western Highlands through a local university.

A workshop on "Business Planning and its Importance for Community Associations" was held on March 27 and 28 in Salcajá, Quetzaltenango, with 25 representatives from community associations participating in FASCO's network. Main topics covered during the workshop included: microfinances in the Latin American and Guatemalan context,

business mission and vision statements, value based management, applicability of the SWOT analysis as an assessment and planning tool, and strategic and business planning.

### **1.3 Develop and consolidate new tourism products and services in the Western Highlands**

#### Consolidation of tourism products and services in San Marcos

Based on the results of the Geotourism assessments, Counterpart is supporting the Local Tourism Committee of Sibinal, San Marcos and its community association members in the design and implementation of a series of operational and sustainability manuals in order to consolidate tourism operations. The manuals and their implementation are aimed at strengthening proper management of a reservation system and proper operations of the tourism guides groups. Specific policies and operational guidelines for the implementation of sustainable practices related to environmental, sociocultural and entrepreneurial fields are currently under final revision. Also, the formats and regulations for control and monitoring of operations have been developed in order to guarantee timely and sustainable operations. The communities of Sibinal serve Tajumulco volcano, the highest volcano in Central America, and a series of community-run farms offering interactive activities for visitors.

#### Technical assistance for Chikabal Volcano and Lake and the Association of Ecological Farmers of Chikabal (ASAECO)

Counterpart is providing technical assistance for this important tourism destination in the Western Highlands and to the local Maya Mam ASAECO association as part of a coordinated effort with CONAP. Counterpart is working in collaboration with ASAECO to implement a work plan that outlines the technical assistance priorities to strengthen the organization and improve the management of the tourism destination. During this quarter, an assessment of the financial and administrative management of ASAECO was performed in order to enable access to potential sources of funding for projects, and to allow orderly management of tourism activities. The assessment and improvement of marketing strategies and tools has started and the website for the destination is under development. Implementation of the tool for detection, prevention and management of tourism impacts in protected areas is underway. Tenders for the development of the technical study and proposal for protected area category modification have been received and are under evaluation by Counterpart and CONAP.

#### Technical assistance for Chajil Siguan natural park, Chuamazan, Totonicapán

Counterpart is collaborating with Helvetas Probosques and Chuamazan community in the implementation of a tourism program for Chajil Siguan Natural Park and community reserve. Counterpart will provide technical assistance in order to improve ecotourism products, strengthening of capabilities to manage the tourism destination and to provide specific services including tour guiding and food and beverages, interpretive design, effective management and marketing of tourism destinations. An important topic to be covered through technical assistance for this destination is participation and empowerment of women, as the initial assessment has shown that there are important limitations to women's active participation in community activities.

#### Vuelve a la Vida – Agua Caliente Civil Association

Counterpart is supporting the community organization managing Vuelve a la Vida hot springs in San Carlos Sija, Quetzaltenango. Based on the work plan developed with Agua Caliente representatives, Counterpart continued to support the emerging association in the participatory socialization and validation of the group's internal bylaws and regulations. The bylaws document was reviewed one last time and minor changes were made. The approval of the bylaws was registered in the association's registry book. Members of the association have expressed that this process has helped them to better understand their rights and obligations as members of the association and will definitely be an improvement in the management model for the Vuelve a la Vida hot springs destination.

## 1.4 Incubate new handicraft producer groups in the Western Highlands and incorporate them into value chains

### Identification and incubation of two new producer groups from Western Highlands

This component is implemented under the sub award with Comunidades de la Tierra. During this quarter, activities focused on identifying potential beneficiary groups and assessing them in order to select two groups with the highest potential to incubate rural enterprises that would then become incorporated into the Wakami value chain. Initially, twelve potential groups from the Western Highlands were identified, researched, and interviewed. Seven groups were selected for in depth evaluations and, based on the assessment results, two groups were selected for this year's incubation activities. Indicative results of the assessments are presented in the table below.

RESULTADO FINAL DE DIAGNOSTICO A GRUPOS NUEVOS EN EL DEPARTAMENTO DE TOTONICAPÁN		
Grupo	Nombrre	Ranking
1	Xolsacmaljá, Totonicapán	2.752912088
2	Nuevo Amanecer/Population Council. San Andrés Xecul, Totonicapán	2.402962255
3	Cuxliquel, Sn Cristóbal, Totonicapán	1.494114111
4	Sacmixon, Sn Fco el Alto, Totonicapán	1.172306498
5	Xesacmalja, Totonicapán	1.122971014
6	Aldea Vasquez, Totonicapán	1.103804348
7	Las Azucenas, Sn Fco el Alto, Totonicapán	0.881932234

The groups finally selected to receive direct support during 2012 are listed below:

- Name of group: Amistad  
 Location: Cantón Xolsacmalja, Totonicapán.  
 Number of members: 18 (1 man, 17 women, 18 indigenous)
- Name of group: Nuevo Amanecer  
 Location: Cantón los Tuices, San Andrés Xecul, Totonicapán  
 Number of members: 19 (19 women, 19 indigenous)

Once the groups were selected, baseline data was collected according to the Alliances and Feed the Future monitoring frameworks. Social and economic information was collected at the household level. Implementation of incubation through the inclusive business model started immediately.

The business incubation process begins then with an introductory workshop, a very important activity that sets the tone for the formal relationship between the groups and Comunidades de la Tierra. During the workshop, Comunidades field personnel share with the groups the endeavor's vision and methodology. At the end of the workshop, each member of the group signs a personal memo of understanding with Comunidades de la Tierra, which clearly states the roles and responsibilities of both parties.



Figure 10: Introductory workshop with Nuevo Amanecer group

The second cycle of the incubation process is the one related to visioning and strategic planning; in the Comunidades de la Tierra methodology it is referred as the “dreams phase” of the program. The first workshop of the cycle is about individual dreams. Each member of the groups visualizes her or his own dream and shares it with the other members of the group and expresses it through an illustration. Facilitators then help participants to elaborate commitments that will help them in attaining their dreams and stating clear goals and visions.

A second workshop follows the individual dreams workshop. In this second workshop, group dreams and visions are constructed from the individual dreams of the members. The basis of the Comunidades de la Tierra methodology is that these dreams become the drivers and motivators for the required changes and efforts in order to bring improvement to rural lives. During this workshop, each group realizes that they have the ability and liberty to dream and learn. Shared and prioritized dreams become the strategic drivers for each of the groups. In the case of these new groups, accessing markets and selling products were the main shared dreams. The group’s dream for Amistad was stated as “Finding market opportunities and generating new products”, while the dream for Nuevo Amanecer was stated as “Forming our own enterprise and selling effectively”.



Figure 11: A group member from Nuevo Amanecer shares the illustration about her dreams



Figure 12: Dreams prioritizing workshops with Grupo Amistad (left) and Nuevo Amanecer (right)

### Leaders’ workshops

Starting in February, 2012, monthly workshops have been scheduled with leaders of the rural enterprises working under Comunidades de la Tierra. The workshops provide an active space for discussing and analyzing advances and challenges, and also for defining processes that improve the relationship between the rural enterprises and their clients. These workshops are very important in order to maintain harmony and dynamism in the processes and also in order to share new developments including market trends or new fiscal regulations, as was the case of the new regulations in place for Guatemala since the beginning of this year. The other important topic for the February and March workshops was traceability in order to improve the quality of production.



Figure 13: February leaders' workshop held at the Comunidades de la Tierra office in Guatemala City

#### Sales from 2011 beneficiary groups

Sales of the 2011 beneficiary groups have developed in different ways depending on the market trends and the type of products from each group. Sales have resulted in important income increases for the group members and during this year, efforts will be concentrated on expanding markets and increasing sales.

The following table summarizes sales from the beneficiary groups over the life of the project. Total sales of the beneficiary groups add up to Q 146,183 (\$18,862), with the highest group averaging monthly sales of Q7,159 and the lowest Q 3,351.

#### **Sales from Western Highlands incubated businesses (expressed in Quetzales)**

Group/Month	June '11	July '11	August '11	Sept. '11	October '11	Nov. '11	Dec. '11	Jan. '12	Feb. '12	March '12
Vida y Esperanza	Q1,594.25	Q3,040.59	Q2,001.15	Q1,017.35	Q9,766.60	Q6,336.95	Q438.13	Q3,556.18	Q4,475.09	Q1,283.78
El Artesano	Q0.00	Q0.00	Q1,713.28	Q9,292.24	Q9,589.82	Q7,710.44	Q427.01	Q6,065.10	Q1,768.99	Q1,516.07
Luz de lo Alto	Q0.00	Q0.00	Q737.92	Q1,010.86	Q576.18	Q2,457.21	Q1,892.19	Q179.40	Q2,861.78	Q1,667.27

#### **1.5 Strengthen artisan groups already operating in the Western Highlands through the development of value-added handicrafts collections and insertion into value chains**

This component is implemented through a sub award with AGEXPORT's Arts and Crafts Commission. During the second quarter of 2012, actions concentrated on assessing the status with 15 beneficiary groups that had started the process in 2011 and final selection of five additional producer groups that will be incorporated into the process during 2012.

#### New beneficiary groups

After an assessment of potential beneficiary organizations, five new groups were selected to receive technical assistance during 2012. Technical assistance will be aimed at improving individual and collective entrepreneurial abilities, techniques and productive capabilities. During a later phase, work will focus on linking producer groups to relevant handicrafts value chains.

The new selected groups as technical assistance beneficiaries for 2012 are:

No.	Name of the group	Location	Type of products	Contact	Beneficiaries	
					Women	Men
1	El Puente	Comitancillo, San Marcos	Textile and crochet products	Arlindo Velásquez 4336-3202	250	0
2	Asociación de Desarrollo Integral Comunitario ADICO	Esquipulas Palo Gordo, San Marcos	Decorative products with embroidered decorations, varied handicrafts	Enrique López 5226-2843	50	0
3	Asociación de Mujeres Artesanas El Porvenir de Chinantón	Aldea Chinantón, San Andrés Sajcabajá, Quiché.	Natural fiber (cibaque) products	Antonia de León 5322-9138	120	30
4	Asociación de Mujeres Tejedoras Chiquirichapenses AMTEDICH	Concepción Chiquirichapa, Quetzaltenango	Textile personal accessories (backstrap and pedal loom)	Lidia de León 5155 - 4633	80	
5	Cooperativa Integral de Comercialización Tejidos Cotzal	Cantón Xhavaltioxh, San Juan Cotzal, Quiché	Textile and natural fiber decorations and accessories	Pedro Marroquin 4621-9725	40	2
					540	32

#### Follow up with 2011 beneficiaries

Status of the 15 beneficiaries from the 2011 interventions was assessed during this quarter. Some organizations have faced challenges in following up with clients and securing new markets, so efforts will focus in that direction. Four organizations benefited in 2011 will be further supported in order to develop a new collection of products. These groups were selected by Guatemalan exporter, Casa de los Gigantes, as marquee producers as a result of their participation in the New World Crafts. Based on the potential of the groups and market trends, the new collection of products will be segmented for national and international markets. Products from this collection will be promoted at the 2012 New World Crafts and in the August edition of the New York International Gift Fair. The groups that will receive additional technical assistance on product design and quality control are:

No.	Name of the group	Location	Type of products	Contact	Beneficiaries	
					Women	Men
1	Coop. Integral de Producción de Palma COIPALMA R.L	6ta. Avenida 4-03 zona 1. Santa Cruz del Quiché, Quiché	Palm leaves products	Catarina Tamup	7	0
2	Cajetería Ajpop	7a. Calle 1-43 Zona 4. Totonicapán	Traditional hand painted wooden boxes (cajetas)	Jesús García	22	18
3	Artesanas Flor de San Juan (apoyadas	Aldea Río San Juan,	Textile and crochet	Toribia Chávez / Ana Rosa	4	5

	por ASDECOHUE)	Aguacatán. Huehuetenango	products	Mendoza		
4	Mujeres Indigenas (Mujeres Trabajadoras Chotzak)	Aldea Tierra Colorada, Momostenango. Totonicapán	Plastic basketry	Sara Tzun	8	2
					41	25



Figure 14: Handicrafts specialized workshops for beneficiary organizations in Quetzaltenango developed under the sub award agreement with AGEXPORT's Arts & Crafts Commission

award agreement with the AGEXPORT Arts & Crafts Commission in order to feature the products developed with artisans from the Western Highlands during 2011. Wal-Mart stores from Guatemala and Central America visited the showroom, held on March 14 and 15 in order to identify products that they will sell during the "From our hands to your home" festival. Orders generated from this showroom are expected in the beginning of the next quarter.

#### Workshops in Quetzaltenango

Workshops for strengthening of the 20 producer groups supported by Counterpart and additional interested groups from the region were held in Quetzaltenango on March 21-22 and 28-29. During the workshops, 23 leaders from producer groups received training and technical assistance in order to implement improvements in leadership, associativity, quality control, and promotional strategies.

#### Wal-Mart showroom

A handicrafts showroom was held under the sub



Figure 15: Handicrafts showroom for Wal-Mart held at AGEXPORT

#### Quality Manual for Textile Handicrafts Products

This manual was produced with cost share funds and printed with funds from the sub award. The manual is the first of its kind, directed at addressing the main challenges and opportunities detected in rural handicrafts producer groups. A series of workshops to "walk through the manual" and its implementation with beneficiary organizations will be developed during the next quarters.

#### New World Crafts 2012

The New World Crafts Central American Handicrafts Trade Show, 2012 edition is scheduled to be held on September 12 and 13 at Casa Santo Domingo in Antigua Guatemala. As of now, 82% of the exhibit space has been reserved and 100 international buyers are expected.

#### New York International Gift Fair January 2012

Representatives of Guatemalan export companies participated in the January 2012 edition of the NYIGF, featuring several products and collections developed with beneficiary organizations during 2011. Orders received during the show amounted to \$5,500 and contacts are being followed up with 16 potential clients.

## ***Component B: Market-based Conservation Strategies through Tourism and Handicrafts Sectors***

**Objective 3:** Improve the capacity of local communities and other key stakeholders to co-manage and preserve natural and cultural resources through tourism.

**Objective 4:** Improve local community and other key stakeholders support for and participation in the conservation of biological diversity in the regions around key tourism sites.

### **2.1 Improve local and institutional capabilities of public use planning and tourism management in protected areas**

#### Follow up in the preparation of the Public Use Plan for Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park

Counterpart continued to support the implementation of the "Plan for strengthening local capabilities for tourism development in the Yaxha region". The plan sets the route for integrated planning and development of tourism enterprises and tourism services. A planning group formed by principal stakeholders for the park, including the Ministry of Culture and Sports, CONAP, Counterpart, local development committees, and tour operators was formed and initial planning workshops are scheduled to begin early next quarter.

#### Code of ethics for the implementation of tourism activities in protected areas

The code of ethics and behavior guidelines for tourism in protected areas were developed with support from Counterpart in specific versions for three main audiences: protected areas staff, service providers, and visitors. The validation of the proposed documents started during this quarter in a process led by CONAP with main stakeholders. Once approved in their final version, Counterpart and CONAP will continue to collaborate to prepare a series of dissemination materials and workshops. These will assist in motivating stakeholders in protected areas to implement and abide by specific behavioral codes.

#### Visitor impact detection, prevention, monitoring and management tool for protected areas

Counterpart is currently collaborating with CONAP and the Ministry of Culture to develop a tool for the detection, prevention, monitoring and management of tourism impacts in protected areas. The tool will be developed through a series of pilot interventions that will then be synthesized into a generic tool. The initial field visits for the first pilot areas were carried out between February 17 and 23. In Yaxhá-Nakum-Naranjo National Park, Petén, administrators and community tourism organizations participated in the introductory workshop and first site evaluation visits. In Chikabal Volcano and Lagoon, Quetzaltenango, representatives from the local organization ASAECO, tourism guides and park rangers participated in the introductory workshop and initial site visits. For both sites, the field visits were complemented with interviews with local tour operators and Spanish Schools. In both cases, the workshops, site visits and interviews were focused on identifying and categorizing the main tourism impacts. In Chikabal, one of the main threats is the celebration of the "Prayer for Rain," which brings together over 5,000 visitors a day (celebrated 40 days after Easter). Information from the introductory workshops was used to characterize the current state of both protected areas and to introduce necessary changes to the evaluation tool. Once the tool is adapted based on the findings of the introductory workshops, a second workshop will be held in each protected area. During the second round of workshops local protected area administrators, staff and stakeholders will participate in a basic training on the tool. Additionally, a field test will be carried out to evaluate impacts for each of the areas and to test the tool's relevance in each protected area.



Figure 16: Meeting with representatives of Spanish Schools and Tour Operators in Quetzaltenango to discuss impact detection and prevention at Chikabal Volcano and Lake



Figure 17: Site visit during the initial impact evaluation at Yaxha, Nakum, Naranjo National Park

Coordination of efforts with CONAP for the implementation of the "Promoting ecotourism to strengthen the sustainability of the Guatemalan protected areas system" project, partially funded by GEF

On Friday January 27<sup>th</sup>, Counterpart participated in a meeting with CONAP, UNDP, TNC, Vivamos Mejor, Helvetas, and Rainforest Alliance to coordinate implementation efforts of "Promoting ecotourism to strengthen the sustainability of the Guatemalan protected areas system". The project has been negotiated and structured, which took much longer than expected. It was recognized that many of the actions previously implemented by Counterpart supporting the strengthening of the legal framework and local capabilities for the appropriate management of tourism in protected areas have contributed greatly to program implementation. More importantly, a considerable number of actions planned jointly for implementation in collaboration with CONAP will contribute to the project's cost share and leveraging requirements. Some of the activities will include:

- i Development of a code of ethics and codes of conduct for tourism activities in protected areas.
- i Development of a monitoring tool for public use plans in protected areas.
- i Development of tools for monitoring of tourism impacts in protected areas.
- i Development of Public Use plans for protected areas.
- i Implementation of the Mega diverse Guatemala Expo.
- i Development of the master plan for the Todos Santos Municipal protected areas.
- i Development of the technical study for Chikabal protected area.

Preliminary steps in the development of the master plan for K'ojlab' tze' te nom Regional Municipal Park, Todos Santos Cuchumatán

Todos Santos Regional Municipal Park, covering 7,255 hectares, is the first protected area declared in the Huehuetenango department and the only protected area in the subtropical montane forest ecosystem of the Cuchumatanes Mountains. The area has a high biodiversity value and holds many endemic and threatened species. Scenic beauty and cultural diversity constitute added values of the area.

From 2005 to 2009, a process to develop a master plan for the protected area was initiated; however, the process was interrupted by conflicts regarding delimitation of the area and lack of involvement of local communities. New processes to generate a master plan are needed in the area, but should begin with conflict prevention meetings with relevant local stakeholders. Counterpart is supporting awareness and coordination workshops with municipal authorities and technical staff from the Todos Santos municipalities. The process also includes workshops with assistant mayors and park rangers from communities located within and around the park and with the community development committees (COCODEs). Logistic and planning arrangements for the workshops started during this quarter and the workshops will be completed early next quarter.

#### Validation of co-management tools for protected areas

Counterpart is collaborating with CONAP to validate the new guidance tools and policy for co-management of protected areas. The first workshop on protected areas co-management was held in Quetzaltenango on Wednesday, March 7, with participation of 29 (4 women, 25 men) representatives from CONAP regional offices, protected area co-managers, conservation organizations and municipal representatives (including Todos Santos, Concepción Chiquirichapa, Quetzaltenango, and San Marcos La Laguna). During the event, CONAP's Legal and Conservation Units departments' representatives answered questions and led discussions regarding the most relevant points and changes included in this new version of the protected areas co-management policy,

#### Systematization of the Unified Registry of Visitors to protected areas

Counterpart International supported the Technical Council for Tourism in Protected Areas in the promotion of the Unified Registry of Visitors (RUV). Initial versions of the RUV were implemented between 2007 and 2008, while official implementation began in 2009. In 2010, a computer program was developed to facilitate entry, storage and processing of data from the RUV. Limited resources for monitoring implementation have generated delays and loss of information in some protected areas. Information generated by the RUV would be invaluable in planning for better management of the protected areas and in developing market-based tourism and service activities. Counterpart is supporting a process for recovery of missing information from the RUV in key protected areas, detecting and addressing flaws in the system and providing technical assistance on the use of the RUV to protected area managers. Early in the next quarter, visitor profiles will be produced for some key areas and training and technical assistance visits for protected area managers will be implemented.

#### Official protected areas tourism website

As a follow up to the production of the guide "Journey through the protected areas of Guatemala", the official protected areas tourism website is being produced. The project is financed by INGUAT, and CONAP and Counterpart International are providing technical assistance in site content development. . The official launch of the site is scheduled for the end of April and Counterpart's support has been requested to host a public event. Counterpart will also support a digital marketing strategy in order to position the new site in an efficient and professional manner. This will allow for better informed visits to protected areas and widespread knowledge of key Guatemalan protected areas as tourism destinations.

#### Mega diverse Guatemala Expo

As stated in the 2012 work plan, Counterpart is supporting CONAP in the development and implementation of the Mega diverse Guatemala Expo. This expo was identified as a priority need during the process for the production and validation of Guatemala's National Biodiversity Policy. During the Biodiversity COP 10 in October 2010, Guatemala was included in the list of mega diverse countries (those that hold over 70% of the planet's biodiversity but have little awareness of the country's rich biodiversity assets and their importance.) The Expo will communicate in state of the art fashion Guatemala's biodiversity assets and their importance and potential for the country's future development. The Expo will place a strong focus on Guatemala's Protected Areas System, which covers roughly 30% of the country and includes several of the top tourism destinations in the country. Work on design of the expo started during this quarter and sketches are expected for the end of April Once the graphic layout is produced, the panels will be implemented and the Expo will begin between May and June.

## **2.2 Support SMEs in the implementation of good management and environmental practices leading to a sustainable tourism certification seal**

Counterpart develops this component through alternative activities that lead to improving management and sustainability practices and promoting some form of public and sector recognition for those SMEs involved. The alternative activities include: Working with Guatemala's Center for Cleaner Production in order to implement the cleaner production methodology in selected businesses in specific destinations of the country and using the Geotourism strategy as a complementary good practices implementation and recognition intervention for tourism businesses and destinations.

#### Implementation of cleaner production in restaurants of Lake Atitlán

In collaboration with Guatemala's Center for Cleaner Production (CGP+L), Counterpart supported the implementation of the cleaner production methodology in 15 restaurants of Lake Atitlán. The process included customized assessments, improvement plans, and technical assistance for implementation, baseline data, and evaluation of results for each of the restaurants. Additionally two workshops were carried out during the implementation phase of the program and one was implemented as a communications and motivation strategy at closeout of the program.

Cleaner production was identified as a definitive need for enterprises in Lake Atitlán in order to improve competitiveness, contribute to conservation of the environment and comply to new regulations regarding water disposal in the region. This initiative complemented another USAID initiative funded through the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), which focused on hotels in the region.

Main results of this activity included improvements in efficient use of water and energy and efficient lighting, such as the following:

- i Installation of grease filters in each of the restaurants according to the new regulatory standards for the region.
- i Replacing fiberglass roofing with polycarbonate in order to expand half-life and reduce the need for artificial illumination.
- i Implementing aerators in faucets to reduce water consumption up to 35%.
- i Replace light bulbs with energy saving units.
- i Implementing controls for water and energy consumption.

The enterprises participating in the program are members of the Panajachel Restaurant Association:

1. Restaurante La Terraza
2. Restaurante La Palapa
3. Restaurante Atlantis
4. Restaurante Casa Blanca
5. Circus Bar
6. Restaurante Deli Jazmin
7. Restaurante The Last Resort
8. Pupusería "El Chero"
9. Restaurante Alta Mar
10. Restaurante El Cayuco
11. Pana Rock Café
12. Restaurante El Bistro
13. Restaurante El Chaparral
14. Valentino's Steak House
15. Pizzería Ulsan

#### Implementation of cleaner production in hotels and administration of Tikal National Park

As part of the collaborative effort with Guatemala's Center for Cleaner Production (CGP+L), Counterpart facilitated the implementation of the Cleaner Production methodology in the three private hotels located within the grounds of Tikal National Park and with the administration of the park, which manages one of Guatemala's top tourism destinations on a day to day basis.

After completing the training, assessment, customized technical assistance and implementation process, the results of the program were presented during an event held on March 23 in Santa Elena, Petén. During the event Karen Rosales from the CGP+L presented the general aspects of the project and then select beneficiaries presented their experience with the process and the results of the implementation.

The complete process started in early October, with one to one meetings with representatives of each hotel and the park administration. Later, a two day induction workshop was held in Flores, Petén in order to introduce hotel representatives and park managers into the cleaner production principles and methodology. The workshop resulted

in full agreement by the hotels and park administration to participate in the process and technical visits to each of the venues were programmed. Site visits during November and December served to perform in situ evaluations and measurements of water and energy consumption, as well as performing evaluations of illumination and waste management, among others. Implementation plans were drafted individually with each beneficiary and a green team with a key leader was established in each venue in order to follow up on the recommendations for the implementation of the action plans. The main actions and results from this initiative are summarized below:

#### *Jungle Lodge Hotel*

- i Water heaters were fixed and settings were modified in order to save energy.
- i All the conventional light bulbs were replaced with energy saving 13 W bulbs.
- i Thin electric cables were replaced with thicker cables in order to improve energy efficiency.
- i Leakages in fridges were repaired.
- i Water pressure from faucets was reduced.

#### *Jaguar Inn Hotel*

- i Water flow reducers were installed in faucets and showers.
- i Toilet tanks were replaced with smaller capacity ones
- i Temperature from water heaters was adjusted leading to considerable savings in gas consumption: from using a 25 lbs. cylinder every three days to the same cylinder lasting 10 days on average.
- i Gradual replacement of regular light bulbs with energy saving units is underway

#### *Tikal Inn Hotel*

- i Energy generator was replaced with an improved technology reduced noise unit in order to prevent disturbance of wildlife
- i PET and paper collection and recycling programs are underway
- i Leakages were detected and fixed in restrooms
- i Regular light bulbs were replaced with energy saving units
- i The complete electric cabling system was replaced in order to increase energy efficiency
- i Stoves were regulated in order to increase efficiency

All three hotels were interested in reducing water hardness and clean energy generation through solar panels and solar water heaters as priority issues for a follow up phase

#### *Tikal National Park Administration*

- i As part of the 2012 strategy (also supported by Counterpart in other fronts), Park's management proposed the replacement of the restroom and water pumping systems in order to reduce water consumption
- i A PET collection, reuse and recycling program is underway
- i Rainwater collection systems are being studied in order to reduce the need to transport water to restrooms and services within the park
- i The Park requested specific training on Cleaner Production for the full Park staff composed of 290 operational workers

### **2.3 Facilitate training and certification or re-certification of a larger number of Community Tourism Guides**

#### Yaxha region community tourism guides

As part of the coordination efforts with the management structure of Yaxha – Nakum – Naranjo National Park and the communities providing tourism services within the region, Counterpart facilitated a course on 2012: Archaeology, Astronomy, Epigraphy and Prophecies of the Ancient Maya for tourism guides and some members of the Park's staff. The workshop was held on March 29 and 30, facilitated by expert Guatemalan archaeologist Ernesto Arredondo

PhD. During the course, 30 tourism guides and park's interpretive staff (4 women and 26 men) were trained to better understand the interest and expectations surrounding the Maya change of era to be celebrated on December 21, 2012. The course was supported by a manual developed with Counterpart's assistance. Participants expressed satisfaction and motivation after participating in the workshop, since it will allow them to provide tourists with adequate and updated information, backed up by recent scientific research and generating added value to their work. The workshop is seen as very relevant not only by local stakeholders, but also by other members of the tourism value chain, including tour operators and INGUAT, since Yaxha is considered one of the main sites related to the 2012 phenomenon and is being included in the Biaktun route being developed with support from Counterpart and INGUAT.

#### National Tourism Guides Congress

Counterpart will collaborate with INGUAT and local tourism guide associations in the organization of the National Tourism Guides Congress. The congress will provide 50 hours of certified training for tourism guides and the opportunity to share experiences and further the consolidation of a national federation of tourism guides. A preparatory meeting for the organization of the congress was held at INGUAT on Tuesday January 31<sup>st</sup>. During the meeting participants decided that Tecpán will host the congress, in light of the strong support and coordination presented by the local tourism committee (CAT). Counterpart will continue to work with both INGUAT on general organization and logistic aspects for the Congress, and with Tecpán's CAT on strengthening their marketing and conservation efforts through private reserves. It was also agreed that the closing conference of the congress will be a 13 Baktun 4 hour workshop facilitated by Counterpart. The dates for the congress have been set for the final week of May and promotion of the activity will begin early in the next quarter.

## **2.4 Design and implement expansion strategy for Geotourism initiative in Guatemala**

#### Vernal Equinox Festival in Tecpán Guatemala

As part of the follow up actions to the Geotourism assessment performed by Counterpart for Tecpán, Chimaltenango, and as part of the support to activities related to the Biaktun Route, this program supported the implementation of the Vernal Equinox Festival in Tecpán. The tourism sector of Tecpán has been greatly affected during the past five years due to a combination of high climate vulnerability and the construction of the new road, which has affected traffic and stopovers in the region. During the Geotourism assessment it was identified that Tecpán would benefit greatly from promotional and commercialization events that would draw tourists to the region. The Vernal Equinox Festival was designed with this idea on mind. The local tourism sector embraced the festival as an opportunity to professionalize the local tourism offerings and promote local customs and traditions.

The festival, held from March 17 to 24, included varied activities such as the following:

- i Maya dance, Marimba music, and Folk dance presentations in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Sports
- i Maya Kaqchikel Archaeology Tours: offered by local students who are being trained as Community Tourism Guides
- i Workshops on Maya cosmological vision and relationships between local flora and Maya culture
- i Traditional textiles expo in collaboration with Ixchel Museum and Proteje Committee
- i Fundraising luncheon to benefit Iximché Archaeological Park with tourism management improvements

#### New developments in Geotourism

The new authorities both at INGUAT and ANACAFE have expressed interest in exploring the possibility of pursuing a reprint of the Guatemala Geotourism MapGuide, previously produced in collaboration with National Geographic. The production of a new run of maps would require some changes in the original map that would need to be commissioned to National Geographic in order to update the product. Negotiations are underway regarding possible

avenues for implementing a reprint of the map, since the previous run of approximately 20,000 units was effectively distributed.

## **2.5 Implement environmental and sustainable tourism good management practices in rural communities**

### **Strengthening of Maya Hostels in San Juan La Laguna**

This intervention is being developed in collaboration with Atitlán Association and Rupalaj K'istalin Community Tourism Guides Association. The process was designed in order to formalize and strengthen a group of 18 local families (specifically the women in these families) that provide homestays for tourists in San Juan La Laguna. A customized training and technical assistance program, consisting in 13 modules was developed for this purpose.

The initial modules were implemented during this quarter and the topics covered included: 1. Community tourism and its benefits, and 2. Exploring the culture of San Juan La Laguna. The training and technical assistance is focused on local women, as they are the ones who became involved in this activity as a means of generating additional income for their households, and they are mostly in charge of providing services to the tourists. The trainings have an entrepreneurial focus in order to generate leadership and entrepreneurship attitudes in the beneficiary women.



Figure 18: Workshop for Maya Hostels in San Juan La Laguna

### **Tourism Environmental Best Practices Workshop in Tejutla, San Marcos**

In collaboration with INGUAT, Counterpart implemented a workshop on Tourism Environmental Best Practices for tourism sector leaders of Tejutla, San Marcos, utilizing methodologies from Counterpart's Sustainable Tourism Best Practices Guide for Communities of Latin America. The workshop was held on March 9, 10 and 11 with 30 representatives from the Community tourism guides group, local tourism committee (CAT), Competitiveness Table, Grupo Gestor, municipal government, and house of culture. The workshop was aimed at identifying priority opportunities and weaknesses in order to plan for further actions. As in many other cases, solid waste management was identified as one of the most pressing issues and immediate actions were planned in collaboration with the Municipality. The workshop also allowed for discussion of other topics such as the strengthening needs for the local tourism committee, foreseen actions for the new group of certified community tourism guides, and the development of new tourism routes and products in the municipality.



Figure 19: Sustainable tourism good management practices workshop in Tejutla, San Marcos

#### Workshop on Effective Design of Tourism Packages for Community Destinations in Verapaces

In collaboration with INTECAP, Counterpart implemented a workshop on Effective Design of Tourism Packages for 13 community tourism destinations integrated into the Viviente Verapaz Alliance in the Verapaces region. The workshop, held on March 19 at Cooperativa Chicoj, was attended by 25 community leaders and tour operator representatives (5 women and 20 men). Topics covered included: design of packages, estimation of costs, financial analysis, profitability assessment, and profit & losses records. The Viviente Verapaz alliance has been working for the past two years based mostly on good intentions from its members, but had been experiencing trouble in packaging marketable products. The workshop was implemented as a practical approach leading to generating competitive products and marketable business initiatives for the Alliance and its members.

#### Forest fires prevention workshop

On March 20 and 21 Counterpart supported a workshop on forest fires prevention for communities located around Tikal National Park. During the course, seven women and 23 men from the communities of El Porvenir, El Remate, Zocotzal, and El Caoba discussed threats and strategies for fires prevention in the upcoming dry season. Besides from the obvious impacts on biodiversity and environmental balance, forest fires can also hamper the experience of visitors to Tikal National Park by polluting the atmosphere and limiting visibility.

#### National Congress on Traditional Collective Uses of Biodiversity

Counterpart collaborated with CONAP and the Central American Economic Integration Bank (BCIE) in the implementation of the National Congress on Traditional Collective Uses of Biodiversity. This congress is one of the important follow up actions for the implementation of the National Policy on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol, after Guatemala became recognized as one of the 19 Mega diverse countries in the world. In total 178 persons participated in the Congress (73 women, 105 men), held in Guatemala City from March 28 to 30. Half of the participants were community leaders from all the departments of Guatemala and the other half was composed by academic, research, and NGO and government representatives. During the event, international experts presented exemplary cases and trends in traditional collective uses of biodiversity and leaders from rural communities and institutional representatives discussed challenges and opportunities that should be approached through planning and support actions by the relevant government and private institutions. Of course, tourism and handicrafts are included among the main uses of biodiversity that local communities are interested in developing in an integral way respecting traditional knowledge but also catering to market needs.

Traditional collective uses of biodiversity are especially relevant in conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The National Policy on Biological Diversity clearly states that traditional ancestral knowledge should be promoted and that mechanisms should be developed in order to facilitate research, documentation, recovery, rescue, promotion and protection of traditional and ancestral knowledge associated to sustainable use and management of biological diversity. Guatemala's unique cultural and biological diversity conditions make the topic even more relevant and complex. Mechanisms need to be developed in order to generate participatory processes that facilitate equitable access to resources and fair access to knowledge and resources.

Some of the main conclusions of the Congress included:

- i There are some experiences of management of biological diversity elements through traditional knowledge in the country; however, these are isolated experiences with little institutional support. The Congress agreed that a national program or scheme integrating planning, feasibility assessments, technical, financial, and administrative support would improve sustainability of processes related to biodiversity sustainable use and/or conservation through traditional uses and knowledge.
- i Further research is needed to identify mechanisms that would facilitate biological diversity conservation and sustainable use in a community context and respecting community traditions and customs. Traditional mechanisms must be supported by scientific research in order to provide a complementary and sustainability focus.

- i Implementation of isolated initiatives and experiences limits full capitalization of opportunities and prevents integration and articulation. It is necessary to generate regional coordination mechanisms that will allow for scaling up of impacts and reaching greater levels of incidence.
- i Communities are aware of the erosion of biological diversity elements, especially through substitution of traditional species for commercial and cash crops. Despite the strong influence of globalization, communities recognize that they still preserve some particular cultural elements that are worth of researching, protecting and promoting. Ongoing discussions included: "how can we generate conscience to research, document recover, and protect our traditional knowledge" and "how can we find institutional support for these tasks?"

## **2.6 Strengthen the working relationship between the government of Guatemala and the Maya Biosphere Reserve communities for tourism development**

### Strengthening of community associations in the region of Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park

Counterpart continued to collaborate with the Park's Administration in developing and strengthening capabilities for community associations that will provide tourism services in Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park. It has been determined that this associations will be instrumental in generating job and income opportunities for the communities surrounding the park and in reducing threats to the biodiversity of the park and the Maya Biosphere in general.

On January 16 the Plan for strengthening of local capabilities (developed with support from Counterpart International) was presented to the members of the Yaxha Trust Fund, a local organization formed by the Park's management and the presidents of the 12 local community development committees (COCODES). Some of the main outcomes of this workshop included:

- i Agreement to seek greater involvement from the municipal governments of Flores and Melchor de Mencos in order to support ongoing processes in the park.
- i Formation of a new association that will be dedicated to providing food and beverages services. This step was instrumental in order to solve an ancient existing conflict in the park due to an association that had been formed several years ago but never initiated formal operations. As has been the case with the other local associations, the formalization process for this new association will be supported jointly by the Park's management, Counterpart and Ministry of Economy.
- i Formation of the Local Tourism Committee for the Region of Yaxha, integrated by the local COCODES, Park Management, Counterpart, and the representatives of the community associations that have been supported by Counterpart:
  - o Yaxha Community Tourism Guides Association
  - o Yaxha Transport Association
  - o Topoxte Boat Operations Association
  - o Yaxha Fruit and Snacks Association
  - o Yaxha Young Entrepreneurs Association
  - o Seis Cielo (Six Heaven) Food and Beverage Association
  - o Yaxha United Artisans Association

Strategic and operational functions for the committee were also agreed upon, and a detailed work plan that is being monitored on a weekly basis was also produced. As a priority action that was identified during the process, Counterpart is working with the Park's management and INTECAP on producing a customized training curriculum in order to support community associations and their members based on the information gathered through the strengthening process. Implementation of this curriculum will begin during the next quarter.

### Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo Semana Santa Preparations

The program “Vive Yaxha en Semana Santa” was developed as a pilot initiative in order to integrate efforts among the members of the Local Tourism Committee for the Region of Yaxha, and make the best out of the Semana Santa high season. Through this process, promotional activities were combined with a value chain assessment and planning process that allowed for orderly and strategic provision of community services for visitors. New regulations for the provision of tourism associated services in the park were produced and roles and responsibilities of both the Park and community organizations were defined and agreed.

The value chain approach facilitated the quick generation of new products that were put on the market during Semana Santa. The main products tested during this pilot were:

1. Guaranteed scheduled transportation Yaxha ↔ Flores ↔ Yaxha
2. Yaxha one day tour (operated through community services)
3. Yaxha 2 day/1 night tour (operated through community services)

Promotional materials featuring community services in the park were also produced. Banners and flyers were distributed in key marketing points of Petén (including most hotels, restaurants and tour operators in Central Petén) and along the main access roads. Community associations designated representatives to participate in a press conference and several radio shows in order to promote their new tourism products and services. Signage with new regulations for visits to the park was also produced.

### Specialized assessment for Yaxha handicrafts producers

Counterpart facilitated an assessment of the Yaxha region handicrafts producers who are in the process of forming a community association. Design and handicraft production expert Gabriela Gómez worked with local artisans from February 27 to 29 to assess their products and production techniques and to obtain better knowledge of the region and the assets of the park as a source of inspiration for design innovation.

During the first day of the assessment, the consultant had personal interviews with all of the producers and reviewed their work samples. The second day the assessment focused on observing and evaluating the work of the artisans, making recommendations on tools, techniques and quality. During the third day, the artisan participants lead the consultant on a guided tour of the park, its museum and visitors’ center to draw inspiration and localized design elements into the artisans’ handicrafts.

The assessment pointed out that this group needs even greater strengthening and technical assistance than initially predicted— techniques and materials need to be standardized. A trust fund will be set up to facilitate the acquisition of improved tools. It was identified that the consultancy should be followed up with a more detailed study of iconographic and design elements that can be combined with improved techniques and tools by the artisans to generate a new line of handicrafts with local identity.

### Uaxactun Vernal Equinox Festival

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Vernal Equinox Festival at Uaxactun was celebrated from March 20 to 23. As in previous years, Counterpart supported the local Tourism Commission in the preparation of the event and provided technical assistance in planning



Figure 20: The consultant and local artisans discuss their products and challenges during the technical assistance process

the activities and services for visitors. The event was different from previous years because of the interest of the Guatemalan government in the site as an emblematic site related to the Maya 2012 phenomenon. The Festival was broadcast on national TV (Guatevisión and Channel 7) and several high ranking officials from INGUAT, the Ministry of Culture and CONAP participated in the opening event.

#### World Water Day Celebration

Counterpart supported Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park and the Yaxha Community Tourism Guide Association in the preparation of the Water and Wetlands Festival in commemoration of the World Water Day. World Water Day marks a special date to raise environmental awareness in communities around Yaxha, since the park is one of the world's significant wetlands recognized by the RAMSAR Convention. During the celebration, 500 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade students from communities surrounding the Park participated in a visit to the protected area and in a series of cultural and educational events.

#### Implementation of financial and administrative processes for Carmelita and Uaxactun Tourism Commissions

Subpartner Asociación Balam introduced new administrative and financial software to Carmelita Cooperative, complying with requirements requested by CONAP. Asociación Balam provided technical assistance on importing export accounting records from 2011 into the new system, including Carmelita's Tourism Commission financial data.

This software was previously introduced to the Uaxactun Commission in 2011. During the second quarter Balam provided additional technical assistance in using the software, improving Uaxactun's Tourism Commission's ability to monitor its finances.

#### Strengthening of other Maya Biosphere Reserve community tourism groups

These activities are also carried out under the sub award agreement with Asociación Balam.

Cruce Dos Aguadas community received technical assistance to improve its organizational structure. The tourism group formed mainly by community tourism guides received assistance to begin its formalization and legalization process, leading to a Tourism Guides Association. A set of internal regulations for tourism activity, which will define roles, objectives, responsibilities, among other relevant issues, and a work plan is being facilitated. In order to assess the products and services of this group, Counterpart organized a field trip to El Zotz Biotope with participation of the 22 tourism group members in order to evaluate and redefine tours and related services provided by the community.

Additionally, Counterpart is collaborating with FUNDESA to generate a professional, scientifically based, interpretive strategy for tours guided by the Cruce Dos Aguadas community through its main tourism circuits, including El Zotz biotope and Tikal National Park. Counterpart prepared and published the terms of reference will review proposals early the third quarter.

Additionally, the Paso Caballos community, which established a coordination agreement and work plan with Las Guacamayas Biological Station, received technical assistance to modify and improve local tourism services according to the Biological Station's activities and market segments. The station established strategic partnerships with six tour operators (five national and one international), who have agreed to a gradual incorporation of community guides and food services from Paso Caballos.

## 16. Gender mainstreaming activities and results

17.

Collaboration with the Association for the Integral Development of Guatemala (ADIGUA)

Counterpart is implementing joint activities with ADIGUA through the Economic Reactivation of the Tourism Sector in Western Guatemala program. The main objective of this program is that women become able and empowered to pursue and manage their own enterprises in order to strengthen the technical, administrative, and gender equity abilities of micro and small tourism entrepreneurs and handicrafts producers from Sololá, Quiché, and Totonicapán. Women's specific workshops combine basic information about women's rights and gender with self-esteem and motivation activities in order to empower women who may have been sidelined in the past. Through this program, a greater number of micro and small entrepreneurs will be able to obtain access to credit for productive activities and manage their loans appropriately and in a profitable manner. The program focuses on women to reduce gender-related inequities in access to credit, productive means and entrepreneurial activities. The program combines access to credit, business training and technical assistance with trainings and workshops focused on informing and motivating women. During this quarter, 243 women participated in nine trainings covering business management, women's rights, sex and gender, bakery management, and handicrafts.



Figure 21: Women participating in the Gender specific workshops in Lake Atitlan

### Special case requiring additional actions

Initial interventions in the Chajil Siguan community protected area of Chuamazan, Totonicapán, have suggested that gender mainstreaming actions may be required. It has been determined that although the board of the community association includes women, they never participate or voice opinions. Women play a very passive role in the development of the tourism project and actions are needed in order to empower women and allow them to participate in the benefits of the imminent tourism activities. Since Counterpart's interventions in the area are fairly recent, no immediate action has been taken but the topic has been hinted in order to initiate discussions and identify potential interventions with relevant stakeholders.

## 18. Environmental Compliance

All of the activities implemented during the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2012 continue to fall under the Categorical Exclusion issued to those activities involving technical assistance, training, analyses, studies, workshops, document transfers, and others that will not have an impact on the environment.